
2. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Executive Summary of the Draft EIS/EIR summarizes the purpose and need for the LAX Master Plan as follows:

- ◆ The purpose of the LAX Master Plan is to help provide a level of airport passenger and freight improvements that will support the future economic growth and vitality of the five-county Los Angeles region. An overarching consideration during the planning process has been to achieve the project objectives in an environmentally sound manner. In particular, the Master Plan project objectives are to:
 - ◆ Respond to local and regional demand for air transportation during the period 2000 to 2015, taking into consideration the amount, type, location, and timing of such demand.
 - ◆ Ensure that new investments in airport capacity are efficient and cost-effective, maximizing the return on existing infrastructure capital.
 - ◆ Sustain and advance the international trade component of the regional economy and the international commercial gateway role of the City of Los Angeles.

The Draft EIS/EIR, the Draft LAX Master Plan, and the technical studies that underlie the Draft EIS/EIR contain information and analyses addressing the potential role of LAX in a broader, regional air transportation system in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. These analyses indicate that if LAX does not increase capacity to accommodate some of the projected increase in demand for air travel services, the demand will be met by other airports in the region or elsewhere in the western United States. Failure to fully meet the demand at LAX would also result in lost economic opportunities, including jobs being lost to other regions. As stated in the Draft EIS/EIR, LAWA had concluded that in order to avoid "significant negative consequences" and sustain the economic growth of the region, at least some portion of the increased demand should be met at LAX. The Draft EIS/EIR thus included three build alternatives designed to accommodate some (Alternative C) or all (Alternatives A and B) of the demand projected for LAX through 2015. The No Action/No Project Alternative was included in the Draft EIS/EIR, as required under NEPA, in order to offer a point of comparison for reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of the three build alternatives.

After the public release of the Draft EIS/EIR, several significant events prompted the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, LAWA, and many citizens to reassess the future development of LAX. For example, after publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, SCAG issued a new regional transportation plan indicating that the trend in meeting regional aviation demand should be towards a decentralized regional commercial airport system, whereby future aviation demand should be accommodated at airports where population and job growth over the next two decades are expected to be strong, and not through the expansion of airports located in highly urbanized areas such as LAX. Also, many public comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR stated that LAWA and the FAA should develop a new "regional approach" alternative that would provide improved services and fewer environmental impacts than the No Action/No Project Alternative and Alternatives A, B, and C without increasing capacity. Several members of Congress and other government officials reinforced the call for a "regional" approach. Finally, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have required all airports to carefully consider airport design and projects to enhance airport safety and security.

The purpose and need as stated in the Draft EIS/EIR (summarized above) remains valid today. However, LAWA and the FAA are taking into account the events and circumstances outlined above in considering alternatives for meeting this purpose and need.

As outlined in Chapter 3, *Alternatives*, of this Supplement to the Draft EIS/EIR, Alternative D, the "Enhanced Safety and Security" alternative, offers a well-planned and rational "regional approach" alternative for improvement of LAX. Alternative D would respond to future demand for air transportation by encouraging, but not requiring, other airports in the Los Angeles area to increase capacity to make up for the limitations of LAX. It would allow airlines to accommodate the demand for international aviation at LAX to the greatest extent possible without otherwise increasing capacity of the airport generally. It would also maintain the return on existing capital investments at LAX. Thus, Alternative D would allow the Los Angeles region to realize some of the important economic benefits outlined in the Draft EIS/EIR,

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while at the same time enhancing security and safety at the airport and significantly reducing environmental impacts from airport operations to the surrounding communities.